NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

Lectures on the History of France, by the Right Hon. Sir James Stephen, K.C.B., LL.D., Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1852.

In offering recently some general reflections suggested by this volume, we remember to have said that History has a value independent of its intrinsic and literal truth; in a word, that the *moral* of history is the same, whether its statements be fact or fable, and therefore its practical uses may be maintained in spite of all allegations against its inevitable obscurities and falsities. Whatever may be charged against the great volume of History in point of its liability to error, it cannot at least be denied that it teaches the great moralities of social and political life as cogently and as variedly as the book of Æsop instructs us in the practical wisdom of individual thrift and sagacity; so that if History were all fable it would still be a philosophy teaching by examples, and would convey to us in its parables the lessons of social morality and political economy more forcibly than any iteration of abstract principles; for, says Seneca, "*Longum iter est per præcepta, breve et efficax per exempla;*" so that if history were of no use save to "point a moral," it would still be a study of the greatest utility. In order, however, to arrive at the discovery of historic truth alike in its statements and in its lessons, an unprejudiced admission must be given to any and all conclusions founded on the most careful observation of history in its facts and in the logic which they embody; and by thus applying, as it were, the "euphrasy and rue" wherewith "to purge our sight," we shall be enabled to apprehend the vast and comprehensive principles which should govern the mind in the *induction* of historic facts and in the *deductions* that flow from them. If men *could* learn from history, says Coleridge, somewhere in his "Table Talk," what lessons it might teach them! But passion and party blind our eyes, and the light which experience gives is a lantern on the stern, which shines only on the waves behind us.

But, besides these, the more apparent applications of historical facts and principles, is there such a thing as a science of history, co-ordinating all these various facts and principles into a systematic and consistent whole? If history be a grand drama, of which the world is the stage and men the players, wherein consists the unity of this imposing tragicomedy? This love of unity seems to be implanted in the mind of man as one of the instincts of his nature, and there is an unsatisfactoriness in any study that does not gratify this intellectual craving. Every thing in science, said Goethe, is become too much divided into compartments. In our professors' chairs the several provinces are violently and arbitrarily severed, and allotted into half-yearly courses of lectures, according to fixed plans. I want to know, he said on another occasion, what it is that impels every several portion of the universe to seek out some other portion—either to rule or obey it—and qualifies some for the one part and some for the other, according to a law innate in them all, and operating like a voluntary choice? But this is precisely the point upon which the most perfect and universal silence prevails. And so history, after all, presents to many minds, says Dr. Arnold, an unsatisfactory aspect, because it is a perpetual study of particulars, without any certainly acknowledged law; and though our knowledge of general laws may here, as well as in natural science, be drawn from an induction of particular instances, yet it is not in natural science required of every student to go through this process for himself; whereas in history the laws of the science are kept out of sight, perhaps are not known, and he is turned adrift, as it were, on a wide sea, to navigate it as best he can, and take his own soundings and make his own surveys. Now, allowing the great beauty and interest of history as a series of particular pictures, not by any means barren in matter for reflection, but in the highest degree rich and instructive; transcending all the most curious details of natural history in the ratio of man's superiority over the brute creation; yet I think that we must confess and deplore that its scientific character has not been yet sufficiently made out; there hangs an uncertainty about its laws which to most persons is very perplexing.

Such is the view of history taken by a judicious thinker, and it is one, as we think, which commends itself to the sober judgment of every diligent and prudent investigator of historical annals. History resembles that pyramidal monument at Sais, upon which is inscribed "I am all that has been, is, or shall be; and no mortal man hath yet raised my veil." Or again, history, in its complexity, resembles that wheel in the midst of a wheel seen by the Hebrew prophet in holy vision, and is as mysterious in its ultimate principles as that "spirit of the living creature" which swayed the intricate mechanism, so that when the cherubim lifted up their wings, full of eyes, to mount up from the earth, the wheels, also full of eyes round about, turned not from besides them, and they went straight forward, but *whither* the prophet saw not. Even such a wheel is history, moving straight forward in its ceaseless revolutions, and, though "full of eyes round about," looking towards no visible goal in its progress.

We are aware that there is a more sanguine theory of history than that thus presented—a theory which has for its basis the gorgeous illusion of human perfectability; a philosophical creed which has for its fundamental tenet the dogma that the "whole scheme of a benignant Providence is to be wrought out in this world," and that history records and marks the progress of humanity towards the consummation of this providential destiny: and in this progress towards perfectability we are told that a motto, proud like that of the patriot Hampden, *nulla vestigia retrorsum*, is the armorial bearing inscribed on the history of the race. The unsatisfactoriness of history to many minds without some unifying principle around which its phenomenal details may be aggregated, has driven the historical philosophers to the adoption of various "tentative hypotheses," in order to alight upon some great seminal truth of which all special and particular history may be deemed the effervescence. When Schiller was called to occupy the post of lecturer on history in Jena, he stated the scientific object of universal history to be the discovery and enunciation of a harmony to be educed by human reason from the chaos of historic facts; and not finding this desired harmony in the facts themselves, "the historical philosopher," he says, "takes it out of himself, and transplants it in the order of things: that is, he brings a rational aim in the march of the world, and thus introduces a teleological principle into universal history." With this he walks through the world anew, and applies his fancied principle of harmony to each phenomenon of history: he finds it confirmed by a thousand consentaneous facts, and by as many contradicted. But, so long as important connexions fail him in the series both past and future of historical changes, so long as destiny still holds in reserve her exposition of so many events, he declares the question of historical harmony undecided, and that sentiment prevails which offers to his reason the highest satisfaction, and to his heart the greatest happiness.

If men had always pursued the search for historic unity on these principles, the literary world would have been spared much dogmatism and rash generalization on the philosophy of history. It is such speculations respecting inner principles of history which have tended to impress on modern history that subjective cast which chiefly distinguishes it from the objective style of the ancient historians. With the ancient writers, not even excepting Thucydides among the Greeks or Tacitus among the Romans, the facts of history were deemed more important and filled a larger space in their narratives than the theories of which those facts might be deemed the exponents; but in modern times it would seem that the reverse is the case, and history has degenerated into philosophical essay-writing on politics, religion, society, and art; while the facts, few and sparse, are swallowed up by a flood of common-places, in which they appear, like the shipwrecked mariners of Æneas,

> "—— rari nantes in gurgite vasto."

French scholars, as might have been expected, are the most noted for the width and wildness of their historical generalizations. Whatever subject the Frenchman investigates he immediately subjects to this process of condensation; he would fain render knowledge portable, and reduce the *omne scibile* to a few easily-remembered and compendious formulæ; the *savan* aims to do for the sciences what Lubin does for perfumeries, by reducing them to the most concentrated essence: the French historian, as says Michelet—himself one of the most sprightly and eloquent of his countrymen—loves to collect facts from abroad, in order afterwards to subject them to the examination of his individual sense and perception. And it is in such processes as this that the French evince what M. Guizot calls the distinguishing attribute and prerogative of their genius—to fecundate and vivify a mass of heterogeneous facts and details in science, history, and criticism. The story of the man who replied, when told that the facts of a certain period did not coincide with his theory of their causation, *tant pis pour les faits*, "so much the worse for the facts," could not have been told with an equal degree of *vraisemblance* respecting any other than a Frenchman. The French critics, says Sir James Stephen, being pledged to discover the absolute perfection of dramatic genius in Corneille, Racine, and Moliere, the consummation of wit and taste in Boileau, and the last refinement of graceful pleasantry in La Fontaine, maintain that the secret of the unrivalled beauty of them all consists in the sagacity with which they grasp universal truths, and the precision with which they express them. We quote the passage in illustration of the French fondness for such wide generalizations, even in their literary critiques.

While highly appreciating the philosophy of history as a useful adjunct and supplement to narrative history, we are not of the number who greatly admire those philosophical histories in which the author is perpetually teasing us with his lucubrations, instead of giving us facts. We would rather make our own theory from the facts than feel that we are following the guidance of a man to whom the facts of a history are only secondary to some favorite hypothesis; and, besides, we have no patience with those clairvoyant historians who pretend to resolve into their constituent elements the moral sentiments and motives by which the subjects of their narrative were actuated in any given circumstances. "If the secrets of any single bosom baffle the keenest human sagacity, how may we hope to penetrate the mysteries of those great social changes, in the production of which the wills of myriads, if not of millions, of independent agents were concurring?" The philosophy of history can be best elucidated, we think, in a series of prelections after the manner of Sir James Stephen, in his disquisitions on French history. It is supposed that the reader is acquainted with the great external facts of which France has been the theatre, and it is the function of Sir James to point out the links of connexion which unite the various epochs of French history, and to penetrate as far as possible into the secret springs of human actions. In this case the student of history is not at once called upon to learn the fact and receive the commentary of the historian, but, after a maturer induction of facts, approaches the consideration of the entire subject from a higher stand-point, and with special reference to its philosophical examination. The philosophy of history, says our author, must be no better than so much unprofitable dogmatism to him who does not know what are the facts of history. Truth will never exert her vital and prolific energy except in minds which have accumulated, digested, and arranged the premises from which truth is to be inferred. To the philosophy of history we make no objection, but protest against that popular style of historical composition which is philosophical, to the exclusion of the facts upon which all sound historical philosophy must be ultimately founded. We prefer to read a Froissart or Philip de Comines, who makes us at once spectators of his simple and dramatic action, rather than be entertained by philosophical reflections and moral observations that bear about the same relation to the narrative as the homilies of the chorus bear to the drift of the play in a Greek tragedy. In perusing such histories as those last described, we feel much like the venerable old lady who, after reading a copy of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, with Scott's practical annotations, remarked that she "understood the whole book, *except the notes*."

That there is such a thing in embryo as the "Science of History," is a question respecting which we entertain no doubt; but that the time has come for this science to be written is a point that may be, we think, safely denied. A few years ago the science of Chemistry was a mere agglomeration of incoherent facts; and it was not until the great laws of chemical combination were discovered in the principle of definite and multiple proportions, that this most interesting branch of human knowledge rose to the dignity and importance of a legitimate science. It seems to us exceedingly irrational and improbable that the events of history are controlled by blind fate or chance, and, while making all due reservation for the free agency and caprice of the individual and social man, we incline to believe that the development of history is subject to laws peculiar to itself, but which, for the present, are destined to elude the sagacity of the scientific investigator. The science of history, in our conception, is not to be fully and satisfactorily written in this world; nor can the great problem of "eternal providence" be truly solved until "the last syllable of recorded time" shall have furnished its quota of significance to the as yet unfinished volume of history. History, we are persuaded, has its law; and this law is "the harmony of the universe;" but its seat is the "bosom of God." The world's story composes a plot so intricate in its characters and details, that he must be a keen speculatist who has already caught the drift of the narrative and ventures to predict the denouement. Our readers will perceive that, according to the principles thus expressed, the science of history becomes rather theological than philosophical.* It was an allegory of the heathen poets that the highest link of Nature's chain must needs be tied to the foot of Jupiter's chair; and surely it may be safely presumed that if there is a "divinity that shapes our ends," the tangled, complicated, and apparently divergent threads which compose the web of history may yet be tied to the throne of Him who "seeth the end from the beginning," and who regards, if not with equal concern, yet

> ——— with equal eye, as God of all,
> A hero perish, or a sparrow fall.

We know not how better to express our theory of historical science than by stating it in the language which Sir James Stephen employs in his exposition of Des Cartes's method of scientific investigation. "The divine unity is the common basis of all the multiplied diverse and dissimilar phenomena of creation, and science is but the path by which we return to that unity; the progress of this science is a continually progressive generalization; the constant discovery of new harmonies, and reconcilement of seeming differences, until at length the whole universe shall be revealed as under the rule of some few laws, and those laws as dependant on God, and God himself as the common centre of all, as one in every form and species of unity, the single fountain of universal life."

We are conscious that in expatiating at such length on a favorite theme, we have deprived our readers of a greater pleasure they might have derived from a special critique of the volume whose title heads this article; and as some amends for such deprivation, we append the following extract from Lecture XIX. as a specimen of Sir James's style of thinking and writing:

"That skepticism has long been among the natural characteristics of Frenchmen, I infer, not merely from the general tone of so much of their literature, but also from that peculiarity of it which French critics make their boast. It bears, as they truly say, constant witness to the national passion for abstract ideas. That passion, indeed, animates not their books only, but their discourses in the Senate, in the pulpit, and at the bar. It takes possession of their clubs, and even of their private society. No aspirant after wit or wisdom in France can make good his pretensions, unless he knows how to scale the transcendental peaks of philosophy. To this species of the sublime they are ever ready to sacrifice even the beautiful. The fine mental sense of Greece (where the love of beauty was a national and universal instinct) would have rejected, with unutterable scorn, those supersensuous embellishments with which Frenchmen, especially in our own times, rejoice to adorn their poetry, their history, and their rhetoric; for, in truth, such ornaments are as cheap and vulgar as they are unbecoming. Any man of common intelligence may be easily trained to any legerdemain of the understanding—to the making of abstractions, for example, as easily as to the making of jokes or the making of verses. The production of apophthegms is a hard task to him, and to him only, who allows himself to utter no words without both a definite meaning and a profound conviction of the truth of what he says. The throes and labors of a long life preceded the birth of each of the sayings for which as many of the sages of Greece have been immortalized. But the writer of the newspaper which lies on your breakfast table at Paris is never without his pearls of superlative wisdom to scatter over his account of yesterday's review or opera.

"Whence, then, comes this national habit of quitting the solid earth for the hazy clouds? It is nothing else than the love of that 'provisional doubt' in which these aeronauts find their pleasure and their glory. By the aid of these metaphysical juggleries of words, they sublimate, darken, and dissolve all doctrines, even without the express and formal contradiction of any. They live in a region of half meanings or of no meaning—in a state of contented, though perhaps unconscious skepticism. Wedded to no political opinions, but dallying with all, they pass, in a few brief years, through all the phases in which political society has ever exhibited itself among men, though never lacking 'pure ideas' with which to polish periods, and to darken counsel about each. The France of the last sixty years has indeed been in a state of chronic and unnatural distortion. But her intellectual habits were not, and could not have been essentially different when the hill and gardens of Ste. Geneviève were thronged with the disciples of Abélard, or when the booksellers' shops were besieged by purchasers of the Gargantua, or when the ladies of Versailles were writing Cartesian letters. The enthusiastic popularity of their skeptical teachers has, from age to age, been at once the effect and cause of that state of the national mind, of which we may read the results in every page of their national history. That history every where depicts a people gallant, gay, ingenious, versatile, and ardent beyond all rivalry and all example; but it also sets before us a race more destitute than any other of profound and immutable convictions; and, therefore, less capable than any other of a steady progress in the great practical science of constitutional goverament—a people who are at one time the sport of any demagogue who can veil his selfish ambition under the cant of 'pure ideas,' and at another time the victims of any despot who may be strong enough to trample both the ideologists and their verbal science under his feet."

Our readers will perceive that the truthfulness of this delineation is in no respect weakened by recent political events in France, while the late usurpation of the "Rex President" has given new and added distinctness to the last touch in the picture thus presented.

* It is an instructive fact that he who has written what is universally conceded to be one of the best treatises on the philosophy of history, *Discours sur L'Histoire Universelle*, Par Bossuet, has given to the theological bearings of history a wider scope than any other author.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

New York, January 31, 1852.

Sir: It seems to be a general impression that though certain inventions sent from the United States to the Exhibition achieved renown for the country, the products of our industry, as a whole, did not compare well with those of other nations. Many persons congratulate themselves that the reaper and the revolvers, and the Palmer leg found their way to London, as if, without these, our part in the Exhibition would have been unworthy of notice, while others, confounding dates and facts, ascribe the main part of our success to the triumph of the yacht America in the great race at Cowes. Now, without detracting in the least from the credit we received from these inventions, or depreciating one tittle from the honor the famous yacht won for us upon the waters, it can be safely stated to be a fact beyond dispute that, had not the America come across the waters, nor the revolvers or the reaper ever entered the field of competition, the general products of our handiwork, as exhibited in the Crystal Palace, would have placed our industrial condition no whit below that of any European nation. It is true that we were not fully represented. What we took to England was not a fair exponent of what we left at home. There is not a workshop in New England, nor a plantation in the Southern States, nor the log hut of a settler on the Western prairies, which could not turn out upon emergency some curious tool or apt contrivance, or ingenious homely implement invented under the spur of necessity, which would have excited the attention of the intelligent visiters at the Exhibition. And yet none, or next to none, of these best indices of the ingenuity of our people, were to be found among the articles we sent. Without these, however, and without one of the more famous articles of American handicraft, the great body of our contributions was of a character to place us upon a full equality in all really useful industry with any people in the world.

There was one characteristic difference between the results of American and European labor which was very striking. The remark of an intelligent English lady, after repeated visits to our division, that "every thing made in the United States seemed to be after a new pattern," conveys my meaning exactly. The workman in the old countries perfects the pattern of his fathers. The workman here invents a new one. Harness is made in England now just as it was fifty years ago; so are carriage wheels; so are ploughs, harrows, scythes, axes, and other agricultural implements, while in the United States the fashion of every thing in common use is continually changing. Nothing surprised English people more than the slight structure of our carriage wheels. They could not be made to believe that they would hold together when driven. Upon being assured that such wheels were in common use among us, they attributed it to our better roads, and upon the further assurance that English roads were incomparably smoother than ours, they resolved the difficulty in the stronger timber grown in American forests. It was the same thing with our harness; it would never hold an English horse. They said our ploughs would never answer for English soil—a strong team would pull them in pieces, and it was not until the trial was repeatedly made under their own eyes, with their heaviest cattle, in their stiffest soil, that they would bate a jot of John Bull prejudice against our new patterns. The truth was, that the very improvements we had been making for years, which ought to have been, and which were at the last, the most solid ground-work in our favor, became in the outset our greatest hindrance. A new invention was one thing; but an old invention, a thing in world-wide use since the days of Noah, a homestead utensil whose very form was rendered sacred by the use of centuries, to twist this into new shapes and convert it to new purposes, seemed like irreverence to the dead.

There were of course other marked differences to be observed between the products of American and European handicraft; some favorable to the one, some to the other. In the results of long-continued toil upon a single branch of industry, such as produces the costly lace, the rich articles of bijouterie and vertû, and the magnificent tapestries—in the peculiar and graceful indications of artistic taste in patterns, which are beautiful even to those who may not be able to recognise the cause; in the rare excellence of the objects of minute art; in the successful application of philosophy to manufacturing chemistry, and in other points of higher or lower grade in the industrial scale, the difference was in favor of foreign labor. But in the production of articles of a more ordinary character and extensive demand, whether ingenuity, utility, or cheapness were considered, the scale was in our favor. Our wood pails, wood bowls, Connecticut clocks, and other Yankee notions, were objects of constant wonderment, not more from their cheapness, than from their adaptability to the commonest wants of life. These, together with our handled axes, hay-rakes, grain cradles, scythes, and sneaths, so constructed that the latter is adjusted to suit the worker, three-tined hay-forks, solid steel hoes, road scrapers, posthole augers, fan mills, smut mills, sausage cutters, sausage stuffers, tinmans' tools, permutation locks, wheel cultivators, carpenters' tools, currycombs, corn brooms, portmanteaus and trunks, ice-cream freezers, axletrees, paint mills, and many other things of universal use here, but in the shape and conveniences which we have given them utterly unknown in Europe, established for our industry a character independent of and unlike to that of any other nation. Our clocks had indeed been known in England before the Exhibition. But our pails, which, with cost of transportation and duties added, could be sold at one-quarter the price of English pails, were a new thing under the sun. All these articles found ready purchasers, and had the number sent been increased a hundred fold, they would have found a market.

Upon the whole, I doubt whether we could have been more correctly represented. More fully represented, had time and inclination warranted, we certainly could have been, but even then the opinion formed by the world of the character and condition of our industry would have been nowise different from what it now is. The distinctive characteristic of the industry of the United States, that which stamps it with peculiarity and gives it a life and form entirely its own, *is the union of thought with labor.* The busy hand is guided by the thinking head. Intelligence takes the place of imitation. There is not an article of domestic use manufactured in our country, which, placed by the side of a similar article manufactured in other countries does not show this.

There is not a fabric wrought, not a crop raised, not a machine put in motion on this side of the water, that does not exemplify this noble distinction of our labor. Take two examples, Bigelow's Brussells carpets and the Dacca muslins, which, though extreme cases, show only what may be observed in a less degree between our own and all foreign productions. The Brussels carpets, so called, owing to the number and arrangement of the colors introduced into them, have suffered less change in their process of manufacture than any other woollen fabric. It has, in fact, been deemed impossible to make any material change in the methods of weaving them. Towards the close of the Exhibition, Mr. E. B. Bigelow, of Boston, brought into the American department certain Brussels carpets, equal in every respect to those exhibited elsewhere in the building, which he claimed to have made by a new process, and at a cost materially less than they were now manufactured in any part of Europe. I think I may safely say, that, within a week after these carpets were visited, examined, the right to manufacture them was negotiated for by the agent of every large Brussel carpet manufactory in Great Britain. In fact the invention was so complete and its improvement so indubitable, that among manufacturers it was pronounced to be most decidedly the greatest achievement of mechanism yet known, and had not the entry been too late, it would have received from the Council of Chairmen a great medal.

The Dacca muslins, for fineness, beauty, and transparency of texture, are unapproached by any other fabric. With the rudest implements, consisting of an iron spindle, a ball of clay attached to it to give it a sufficient weight in turning, and a piece of hard shell embedded in a little clay, on which the point of the spindle revolves during the process of spinning, the Hindoo women almost rival Arachne's fabled skill. The finest thread is spun early in the morning, before the rising sun dissipates the dew upon the grass, lest the tenuity of its fibre should break were the attempt made to manufacture it during the drier parts of the day. The Mulmul Khas, as the finest variety of the Dacca muslin is called, manufactured exclusively for members of a royal family, is woven in pieces of ten yards in length and one yard in breadth, having nineteen hundred threads in the warp, and weighing three and three-quarter ounces avoirdupois to the piece. The length of time required to manufacture a single piece of the Mulmul Khas is about three years, and its cost three hundred rupees. The natives designate it by a term meaning *woven air*. Its manufacture is confined to a single family, to whose delicate organization and the sensibility with which its members are endowed by nature through many generations, is their inimitable skill to be ascribed. It is now more than four hundred years since the Dacca muslin has been famous in India, and the most ancient specimens of it which have been preserved are fully equal to that which is manufactured at this day. Of the persons who visited the Exhibition, ten thousand undoubtedly admired the Dacca muslin where one admired the Bigelow carpets, and yet who does not see that while the one is the result of mere abject toil which ages would not raise from its degradation, the other is the exponent of that nobility of labor, instinctive with intelligence, which is part of the great moral machinery of human progress?

The Tunisian gun, the Damascus sabre, and the blade of Toledo, have all three been famous for centuries. The first, elaborately and gracefully covered with beautiful designs; the second, rich beyond estimate with its gold guards and hilt sparkling with jewels; and the third, tempered to the extremest elasticity and brilliantly polished, were objects of ceaseless attraction to the crowds at the Crystal Palace. But in shape and character they were precisely the same thing that they have been for ages, and had an exhibition for the world's industry been held two hundred years ago, guns and sabres and blades nowise inferior might have been procured to adorn it from the very same places.

In contrast with these take Maynard's Primer, an invention from the United States, which was exhibited at the Commission office during the last few weeks of the fair. This invention, shown upon a musket and a fowling piece of very indifferent appearance, gained more reputation for the country from which it came, than did all the jewelry, elaborate carving, quick temper, pearl inlaying, and gold and silver work, which were contained in every division of the Exhibition, to the countries which furnished them. By the simplest possible contrivance, instead of the usual percussion cap, a coil of fifty primings is inserted at once within the body of the lock, so that the gun surely and safely primes itself for fifty discharges, and that too with a mathematical precision unattainable by hand. The primer cannot be fired with the hammer down or at half-cock, it cannot be accidentally separated from the gun, it cannot be damaged by being jolted, and it requires no tools or appendages to be applied. It costs about one-tenth as much as the percussion caps, occupies less than one-fourth their space, and is proof against the effect of all climate. Of course, under the most favorable circumstances of light and weather, its superiority to the ordinary percussion cap must be great, but under adverse circumstances, where darkness and rain and cold serve to impede the operations of the soldier, and render the act of priming the most difficult of his manipulations, it is an invention increasing in an incalculable degree the efficiency of fire-arms. Colonel (now Sir William) Reid first saw it and called to it the attention of Mr. Macdonald, who, after examining it with great care, wrote a notice of it in the Times. This was sufficient to awaken public attention. Inquiries for the Maynard Primer became so frequent that it was necessary to detail a person to attend to its exhibition. Military men and sportsmen from all parts of the kingdom came to see it, or wrote inquiring if it could be purchased in England. The young Princes, the Prince of Wales, and Prince Alfred, were sent in company with their tutors to see its operation. His Royal Highness, Prince Albert, became interested in it as one of the great inventions at the Exhibition. And last, the "Committee on Small Arms," composed of the most scientific officers of the army, of whom Major General Fox was chairman, sent for it to be brought to the ordnance department in Pall Mall, that they might report upon it in common with Colt's pistols and other firearms.

Things, like men, find their own level. The shining blades and costly appendages of the Damascus sabres were universally admired for many weeks, and towards the close of the Exhibition were as universally forgotten, while an invention like that of the Maynard Primer, destined to work a permanent change in the construction of firearms all over the civilized world, at first unnoticed, grew at length into an importance which all the results of mere imitative labor that had been brought into the Crystal Palace never could reach.

Extreme as the cases cited are, they yet serve to show the kind of character which discriminating men ascribed to American industry, and which grew up to be the public opinion among the various nations represented at the Exhibition. I have not meant to say that industry in every European country is merely and altogether imitative. The various inventions which England and France and Central Europe give to the world, show that it is not; though it should never be forgotten that these inventions with them proceed not, as with us, from the artisans and operatives themselves, but from a separate class, educated and stimulated by the incentive which capital applies. Hence with them inventions mainly concern things which will be serviceable to large manufactories, while with us they include, with these, the ten thousand improvements in household utensils, farming implements, and mechanics' tools, for which patents are claimed. I intend only to assert that the distinctive reputation which the industry of the United States achieved by the products it exhibited at the World's Fair was that of *intelligence*, and that it now bears, and will hereafter bear, as it deserves, throughout the world, the character of *intelligent labor*.

I am, respectfully yours,
N. S. DODGE, Sec. U. S. Commission.

Hon. J. C. G. Kennedy,
Sec'y Ex. Com. Industrial Exhibition.

PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE FROM SAN JUAN.

The following extracts from a Letter, written by an officer of the United States Navy to his relative in this city, and by him handed to us for publication, will be interesting to many readers:

Greytown, or San Juan de Nicaragua,
U. S. Steamer Saranac, January 10, 1852.

Here am I, stowed away in a corner on the hurricane deck, stealing away from the horrible noise, dirt, and heat of the steerage, to catch the gentle zephyrs of the sea. You probably are sitting by a fine glowing fire, listening to the cold wind whistling or the sleigh bells jingling. The thermometer here ranges from seventy-eight to eighty-eight; and the weather is either a broiling sun or a pouring rain. With this of course we cannot be healthy. Fever abounds here: it is the principal product of the country. We have already several men sick with it; one died a day or two ago, but, upon examination, the doctor found that he had disease of the heart. This is winter time here, so you may imagine what it must be in summer.

We reached this place on New-year's day, after a passage of nine days from Pensacola. I suppose of course you know the object of our visit, and I take it for granted that some little information about the state of the affairs of this country will not be uninteresting to you.

The Saranac is the first American man of war that has honored this port with a visit. The English, on the contrary, have paid very particular attention to it, and now keep a man of war here constantly. The Calypso, a sloop of war, arrived this evening to relieve the brig Express, and it is expected that a much larger force will soon be collected here. It seems strange that we should have so neglected our interests as to allow the English to obtain such a strong foothold at a point which is of such paramount importance to us.

Greytown is situated on the left bank of the river San Juan, at its mouth; it is a small place, probably of five hundred inhabitants, situated on a level green spot, between the river and a small but beautiful fresh water lake, which abounds in the most excellent fish as well as alligators. The houses are built of reeds and wood, the former occupied by the natives, the latter put up by the foreign residents, of whom one hundred are Americans, principally California adventurers. All of the improvements are American; and on entering the town you would imagine yourself in some California settlement. At the landing there is a large barn-looking frame with "St. Charles Hotel" painted in large black letters on the front. A step or two further, through the soft grassy streets, you come to another building of the same description, which bears the honorable title of the "United States Hotel;" a little to the right, across a lovely little green, is the "American." At these you may obtain "cobblers," punches, &c. without the ice. In other respects besides its appearance, the town bears resemblance to a California settlement; for chickens are three dollars a pair and washing two dollars and a half a dozen, and vegetables are dear in proportion.

The country along the coast is low, and covered with thick green bushes and trees. In the interior we can see a chain of quite high mountains, whose blue-black outlines, contrasted with the green of the coast, make a beautiful picture. The San Juan river is the southern boundary of the *soi-disant* kingdom of Mosquito, from which it extends about two degrees and a half up the coast and sixty miles in the interior. This is the country which England claims for an Indian who is still a minor, with about as much reason as she would claim Florida for one of our Seminole chiefs, and support his pretensions in opposition to those of the United States.

As this king, as they call him, is still a boy, her Britannic Majesty's Government kindly undertakes to manage his affairs. So Dr. Green, who is the English Consul here, is also the regent of the *realm;* and he has power over this country which her Majesty Queen Victoria has not over England. If he, according to the Bulwer and Clayton treaty, was to give up the government to-morrow, there would be no one capable of taking it among the Indians of course, and the result would be that the Californians here would make a republic of it at once, until the Nicaraguans should come in and claim their rights.

This I suppose you know is the canal route to the Pacific. Nature has made it the route. The San Juan springs from Lake Nicaragua, from which the distance is about fifteen miles to the Pacific. Vanderbilt, one of our merchants, obtained a grant of the Nicaraguan Government to navigate this river with steamers and transport passengers, &c. He has already established the communication. His steamers are long narrow propeller affairs, which do not draw more than three feet at most, even when loaded. There are three of them here now. They go up to the falls, which are more than half up to the lake, and then the passengers get out and walk around to another boat above, which takes them to the opposite side of the lake, when they take mules and cross to San Juan del Sud, on the Pacific.

The current of the river is very swift, always downward; for the lake is much above the sea, and consequently we have fresh water even in the harbor, which is right at the sea. The river here is about three-quarters of a mile in width, and is deep enough to float any class of vessels; but the harbor is rather small, not large enough to contain a large fleet comfortably, unless the vessels be small.

On the side of the river opposite the town there is a long sandy peninsula, which curls around, making the harbor quite land-locked. Vanderbilt took possession of this point for his steamers. His agent, Capt. Banker, is employed putting up houses there for stores, &c.; he has a number of men at work. The English, it appears, claim that point also; they want it for a quarantine ground. Of course they looked on with jealousy at the building of these houses; and it appears that this location does not please the Yankees of the town either, for they want him to come over there and make his depot. So at last the English Consul gave an order that he should vacate on the 1st day of January, 1852. This he swore he would not do; and our opportune arrival on that day probably prevented his being forced off.

Mr. Vanderbilt considers himself entirely independent of any Mosquito Government, for he made his contract with the Nicaraguans, and so he refused to pay the port charges for the steamer Prometheus until John Bull forced him to do it.

Capt. Banker has been very sick with the fever, but is recovering now. One of the steamboat captains died last night with it. We have several men sick, but only one dangerously so. Americans are very apt to catch the disease, particularly those who work in the sun.

January 15.—We are in hourly expectation of the arrival of the steamer Prometheus; she was due yesterday at noon. The critical state of affairs all over the world now makes us look with tenfold interest for every arrival. On the 12th we were gladdened by the arrival of the Albany from Chagres, which just gave the English and ourselves equal force, but yesterday we were cropped considerably by the arrival of the steam-frigate Arrogant, one of the finest vessels in the British navy. She carries forty heavy guns, and it is impossible to tell from her appearance that she has any other power besides that of her sails. The arrival of this frigate places in this harbor alone just the same force that we can muster in the whole Gulf squadron, viz. sixty-eight guns; while the English have not less than five hundred. Very soon there will be a large addition to their force.

We have been here now fifteen days, and those who have been able to enjoy it have had what the Bulls would call a jolly good time. The Yankees have received us with open arms, and we have been dinnered and suppered and balled by them until we are almost exhausted. The second day after our arrival the noble host of the American gave us a grand dinner, where the choicest delicacies of the season were served up with sparkling champaign, amidst spicy toasts and witty speeches. The English officers were invited with our officers on that occasion, and the dinner passed harmoniously throughout. A day or two after, on the 8th of January, the United States Hotel gave a grand dinner. The commodore and captain, two noble souls as ever lived, attended, and had a grand time of it. The English officers came in to the ball, and amongst them was the captain of the Express. We reciprocated by inviting the citizens off to see the ship; and such a crowd, such a motley group, I cannot describe. Pandemonium and Babel! Noble sovereigns of America mixing with unrestrained gayety amongst Jamaica negroes and Indian maids shoeless, Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Spaniards, Englishmen, &c. Last night a grand ball and supper was given to the Albany by the "American."

While I have been writing the English captain of the frigate has been on board, and expresses regret at the occurrence of the Prometheus, and brings word from Admiral Seymour that it shall not occur again. He invites the Commodore to Port Royal, &c.

Postscript.—The Prometheus arrived on the 16th, and brought us much less news than expected; but, however, to make up for that, we received a nice present from Capt. Churchill of ice turkeys, chickens, ducks, and geese. The captain had a row with the authorities directly upon his arrival. The health officer went on board and wanted to see the usual papers; the captain was busy and told him to wait until he was at leisure and he would attend to him. I suppose he felt a little saucy, being under the protection of two American men of war. In the mean time he was getting his passengers into the small row boats. The health officer, Dr. Richards, went off in a huff, saying he would make them attend to him. So he went on board the English frigate Arrogant to complain. Soon after the English captain came on board of this ship, and after he left the Commodore sent an officer to Captain Churchill to inform him that his orders from the Government were that American vessels were to pay the dues of the port. They put the Prometheus in quarantine and stationed the Jamaica negro police with their rusty swords about the beach to prevent the Prometheus's boats from landing. Presently one comes along. The police hailed it. "Is that the Prometheus's boat?" "Yes." "Well you can't land." No attention was paid to that, and they landed in spite of them, welcomed by the Americans on shore. The steamer sails this evening. She brought five hundred passengers. One of the river boats arrived this morning with two hundred California passengers; the other will be down soon with the rest of them.

HONORABLE CORRESPONDENCE.

Senor Don Guillermo Chacon, Captain of the Port of Havana, has, on several occasions, materially aided the vessels of the United States employed in the trade there, which were in imminent peril of being wrecked or stranded, and more recently having rendered important assistance to the American brig *Hollander*, (Captain Hotchkiss,) as she was leaving the port of Havana for New York with a valuable cargo, the Atlantic Mutual, the Union Mutual, and the Mercantile Insurance Companies subscribed for the purchase of a service of family plate, with an inscription noticing the services of that gentleman, and which were subsequently presented to him through the agency of Messrs. Burnham & Co.

Senor Don Guillermo Chacon, in his letter of acknowledgment, says:

"As a sailor and captain of this port, I have contracted the sacred duty to co-operate, as far as it lies in my power and position, to favor and give assistance to any and every vessel finding itself in want of aid. If to this be added the obligation of fulfilling the duties imposed by military laws on those who serve in the navy, it can easily be seen that in my action toward the Hollander I have acquired no peculiar merit, and that your extreme generosity only gave publicity to an event which otherwise would have remained unnoticed."

A correspondence has also taken place between the Hon. Daniel Webster and Moses H. Grinnell, Esq., of New York, on the subject, the result of which has been the following letter of thanks to the Cuban Government:

Department of State,
Washington, November 8, 1851.

Sir: This Department has been informed that Senor Don Guillermo Chacon, the captain of the port of Havana, has upon several occasions materially aided the vessels of the United States employed in the trade there, which were in imminent peril of being wrecked or stranded.

This conduct on his part, contributing, as it has done, to the safety of the property and perhaps of the lives of the citizens of the United States, deserves the acknowledgment of this Government.

I have accordingly to request that you will express to the Captain General of Cuba, or to Her Catholic Majesty's Government at home, the President's high sense of the services of Senor Don Guillermo Chacon upon the occasions adverted to.

I avail myself of this occasion, sir, to offer you a renewed assurance of my very high consideration.

Daniel Webster.

To Senor Don A. Calderon de la Barca, &c.

The Higher Law.—In the last number of the "Nineteenth Century," a *progressive* Quarterly Miscellany, we find an eloquent article by Stephen Dillaye, of Syracuse, on certain doctrines that have been current in certain parts of this country during the last two years. We have only room for the following passage:

"There is nothing of a republic, but its laws; strip it of these, and you take from it its only civilized element. There is no government without restraint; take away this principle, and you dissolve society. To combat these truths is to array one's self against all history, and call in question the bible itself. But true government is in no way opposed to true progress; in point of fact it is the only legitimate means of attaining it. Higher law strikes at the very root of these truths; it would annul constitutions to give place to abstractions; it would sow contempt, but it would make a harvest of outrage. Experience has shown, in our Government, that if a law was opposed to the welfare of society, it was because its theory in practice was wrong. The moment this fact is established, mind combats the evil, and speaks with a million tongues, and arouses a power which no Government can subdue. This power may be named *public opinion, public intelligence*, or *political progress;* it matters not what it be called, you can neither doubt its existence nor resist its force. In a constitutional democracy like ours, the strength of a principle is measured in the public mind by its force at the ballot-box. If it gains ascendency there, it is because a majority proclaims its omnipotence. If, on the other hand, it fails in support there, it is because the public mind believes it opposed to the public good. I hold to the right of the majority to decide. That is the principle of our Government—that is the force of our law. 'Higher law' denies this, and sets up the individual will as superior to the constitutional. It was the fanaticism of this dogma which flooded France with the best blood of her patriots. Human will swelled into passion, and society lost its balance."

FROM THE BUFFALO (N. Y.) EXPRESS.

"Keeping Time with the Telegraph.—We witnessed a curious experiment yesterday at Morse's Telegraph office, which we had before heard of but had never seen. It was nothing less than the ticking of the clock in New York city heard and *seen* at this end of the line. The experiment was most perfectly performed—the regular vibrations of the pendulum in New York being registered on the paper at precise intervals, and heard by striking of the pen-lever at the same instant. This is done by an operation similar to the method of telegraphing itself. It is well known that the bringing in contact of the positive and negative poles of the batteries form what is termed a *circuit*, and produces characters at the pleasure of the persons so bringing them together. One of these wires is connected by a very fine wire to the pendulum of the clock, partaking of its motion; the other is fastened to the side of the clock, so that the pendulum shall strike it in swinging back and forth. When the pendulum strikes, the two wires being brought together, a circuit is formed, and a stroke of the pendulum makes a dot upon the paper, and this is repeated as often as the pendulum strikes the wire in the side of the clock; so that the ticking of the clock in New York is heard even more distinctly in Buffalo than in the office where it is placed. Last evening a similar experiment was successfully tried between Bangor, Maine, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, by connecting the wires of Morse's and Speed's lines at this point, and then proceeding as mentioned above. A clock ticking at one place, and being heard in another, between two and three thousand miles away, is certainly something curious in this age of marvels."

On Wednesday evening an attempt was made to throw the express train from New Haven to Springfield off the track, at Wallingford, Connecticut. A quantity of wood had been thrown upon the rails, which the train came in contact with, but without doing injury. The scoundrel who thus endangered life was tracked in the snow and arrested.

The New York Tribune says: "At a meeting of the Central Hungarian Committee last evening, at the Astor House, proof-sheets were presented of the certificates for the Hungarian Fund in the different denominations of of $100, $50, $10, $5, and $1. They are all engraved in the highest style of art."